



August 15, 2006

FAA Facilities Remain on Code Orange: Following the foiled terrorist plot in London last week, the security level at FAA facilities remains at “orange.” You can find out what “orange” means by reading the [memo to all employees](#) posted on the employee site. The information includes a link to the general notice sent to facilities — called a GENOT. Check the employee site regularly for updates on security and other matters. Meantime, see the [Department of Homeland Security](#) site for more security information from a national perspective. (For personal thoughts on security threat, see “Daddy, What Did You Do during the War on Terror?” below.)

Prepare for a Continuing Resolution: According to a recent *Aviation Daily*, “a congested congressional calendar is making it increasingly likely that the fiscal 2007 Transportation Appropriations bill will not be completed before the November elections, sources say, which would mean a continuing resolution for U.S. Dept. of Transportation agencies, such as FAA.

“The holdup is in the Senate, which traditionally acts on appropriations bills after the House. The House passed its version of the transportation spending bill in June, but the Senate version — recently approved by the Appropriations Committee — has yet to be scheduled for a floor vote.”

Blakey Congratulates Forrey and New NATCA Leadership: Following the NATCA announcement that Pat Forrey had been elected the organization's new president, the Administrator released the following statement: “We congratulate Pat Forrey for winning election as the new president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association. We also congratulate Paul Rinaldi as executive vice president and the rest of the NATCA leadership team. We look forward to working with Mr. Forrey in the months and years ahead. There are many challenges facing the aviation system and we're looking toward a renewed spirit of professionalism, cooperation and mutual respect.”

Forrey is an 18-year veteran air traffic controller at Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center and a two-term president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association's Great Lakes Region. Rinaldi is a veteran controller at Washington Dulles Tower who has served as the alternate vice president for the union's Eastern Region.

Date Set for NATCA Contract Implementation: On July 31, before the election results were announced, John Carr, outgoing president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, was sent a letter from Joseph Miniace, deputy assistant administrator for strategic labor management relations, officially informing him that the NATCA contract will be implemented on September 3, 2006. FAA managers are currently in training to ensure fairness and consistency of implementation. For more see [ATO Online](#).

ATO Leadership Summit Underway: The second annual Air Traffic Organization management leadership summit is taking place this week, August 14-17, at an offsite location in Washington, D.C.

As with last year's inaugural meeting, this year's summit brings together ATO leaders from across the field and headquarters. According to a story on [ATO Online](#), a number of recommendations that came out of last year's summit have already been put in place.

This year's speakers include Administrator Blakey, COO Russ Chew, Robert Crandall, former chairman of American Airlines who is now chief executive of start-up airline Pogo Jet, organization management guru Dr. Jerry Harvey, ATO service unit vice presidents and senior ATO transition officials. Check the ATO page for an agenda and regular updates during the week.

RNP Draws Rave Reviews from Airlines: By and large, FAA's proposals for new airborne systems have not gotten smiley faces from airlines over the years because of costs. But required navigation performance, or RNP, is another matter. For one thing, most modern commercial airlines are already appropriately equipped and the benefits that RNP provides are huge. According to an article in the latest [Aviation Week & Space Technology](#), the carriers can't get RNP fast enough because it's going to save them big time in fuel costs. Here's an excerpt:

"The FAA is accelerating the rollout of 'performance-based' navigation for U.S. airspace, but airlines would like to see this move even faster. By freeing aircraft from dependence on ground-based nav aids and allowing optimum routing with satellite guidance, this technique can save an airline tens of millions of dollars in fuel costs at a single hub airport. The airlines are so eager to reap the benefits, they want the government to let third parties help design the procedures."

An Unexpected Achievement: [Avionics](#) magazine has an article in the latest issue about WAAS, the Wide Area Augmentation System. WAAS has a troubled history and, unfortunately, that's the only side of the story most of us have ever heard. But, it's not the only side and it's definitely not the last word. In March, as *Avionics* reports, "the agency announced that the system has been approved for instrument approaches down to 200 feet above ground level (AGL), equivalent to the guidance from a Cat I ILS." I remember when skeptics were proclaiming that WAAS would never be able to meet Cat 1 standards, and the reporter for *Avionics* was one of those skeptics.

Daddy, What Did You Do During the War on Terror?: I would like to think most of us would respond: "Honey, I refused to submit to terror. That's how I and many others fought this war, and as a result, we won." I don't want to sound cavalier in the face of this latest terrorist plot. That sends a chill up every civilized person's spine. But, let's not forget that the aim of terrorists is to sow terror — and if they can't accomplish that, they lose — by definition. As President Franklin Roosevelt said in a different context more than 70 years ago, the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

I draw heart from a cover story in the September 2006 issue of *The Atlantic* magazine. It claims that the U.S. and the U.K., and other allies, have made significant progress in reducing the effectiveness of Al-Qaeda. Author James Fallows reached this conclusion by assembling 60 experts who provided him an insight into how the global conflict looks from the terrorists' perspective. About half were from military or intelligence organizations; others were academics, or from think-tanks. Half were American — the rest were Europeans, Middle Easterners, Australians, and others.

From the terrorist perspective, according to these experts, it's a pretty bleak picture. Fallows found remarkable consensus on the point that Al-Qaeda has been severely weakened because of mistakes it has made and because of things the U.S. and its allies have done right. Al-Qaeda is no longer the Al-Qaeda of 2001 and Osama bin Laden is irrelevant from an operational perspective.

So, instead of relying on a portrayal of the U.S. and other civilized countries as powerless against terrorist foes in this "asymmetric" struggle, these experts conclude that "terrorists can damage, but not destroy us. Their real destructive power... lies in what they can provoke us to do."

The Last Word: On the lighter side, go see the comedy "Little Miss Sunshine." However, if you are offended by rough language, don't go see "Little Miss Sunshine." That's the only caveat. Otherwise, you're in for a treat. Maybe its eminence is achieved by the flatness of the surrounding terrain because there are not too many movies out there worth seeing, as far as we can tell. "You, Me, and Dupree" has its moments, but overall it's pretty lame. "The Devil Wears Prada" is not bad — Meryl Streep is great, as usual — but it's nothing to write home about either. On the novel front, I have started reading *Handling Sin* by Michael Malone. It's pretty funny so far. One reviewer said it's a "highly refreshing tale in which Malone has managed to make the bizarre hilariously credible."

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To read other articles in the *Focus* go to <http://employees.faa.gov/news/focusfaa>. There are some interesting articles on FAA in Alaska. Check out the picture of the "mutant" Russian Blue fox.